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ABSTRACT

The methodology is reviewed and recommendations offered regarding alternative administrative structures. A more systematic study of the literature is advocated, along with the establishment of a reference group of administrators to act as advisors to the research team. The research must be focused on more than one department. The systems approach should be preferred as a method, with the behavioral approach developed further before it can be used in a practical project. The next phase of the project has to be drafted in close contact and cooperation with the administrative reference group. The proposed project must be presented to the members of the IMHE program for comments, suggestions, and approval, and time for amendments according to discussion of the project draft should be allowed. It is concluded that execution of the project can take place at the various universities, in cooperation with the administrative reference group members. (LBH)

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centre for educational research and innovation

PROGRAMME ON INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF ALTERNATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

evaluation report

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CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Centre for Educational Research
and Innovation

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STUDY OF THE COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF ALTERNATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

Evaluation Report

by

Lars Uno Thulin

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Second General Conference of Member Institutions
Paris 20th-22nd January, 1975.

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I

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT

A major objective of the Second General Conference of Member Institutions of the IMHE Programme is to evaluate the proposed methodologies and results of the three research groups which will have completed their work during 1974. For each research group, therefore, an outside expert was designated in advance of the Conference and asked to undertake an impartial evaluation of its work. The guidelines issued to evaluators stressed the need to assess the validity and scientific interest of the results, their operational usefulness for achieving better management of higher educational institutions, their transferability to different countries and institutions and their comparability with findings resulting from similar research carried out elsewhere. In addition, evaluators were requested to briefly summarize the findings of the project in order that readers who had not had an opportunity to consult the full report in detail would be apprised of its content and to formulate concrete proposals for subsequent analysis on the same or related topics.

This report evaluates the work of Research Group No. 3: "Study of the Comparative Effectiveness of Alternative Administrative Structures". The Centre for Educational Research and Innovation wishes to express its sincerest thanks to the author.

PART I.

THE PROJECT

The first General Conference of Member Institutions within the CERI Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education was arranged in January 1973. At the conference a main theme for discussion was the effectiveness of university government and administration. It was clear that very little substantive research had been undertaken concerning the development of measures of effectiveness of administrative structures of universities and other institutions of higher education.

On this background the IMHE-programme assigned high priority to stimulate and initiate some research in the mentioned area. As stated in the note by the secretariat the project was designed more as a feasibility study than as a result-yielding, full-size, research programme.

From the outset, the project was viewed as a pilot exercise and it was not foreseen that results which could be directly applied in practice would emerge. Rather, the project was divided into three distinct stages, each with rather limited objectives. The first stage, which began in May and ended in December 1973, was devoted to:

- formulating workable definitions of effectiveness of administration in institutions of higher education.
- exploring and identifying a number of measures of administrative effectiveness and structure in such institutions.
- testing the practicability of such definitions and measures against on-going processes.

The project was carried out by a small team of researchers in the Department of Operational Research at the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom, with professor B.H.P. Rivett as Project Supervisor. At the outset two conceptual approaches were proposed, namely the Systems Approach and the Behavioural Approach, the methodologies and results of which are the subject of this report. Throughout the first stage of the project, considerations were given to the development of a methodology which would be applicable in a variety of national context and towards this end a small meeting of experts from different OECD Member Countries was convened in Paris in October 1973 in order to provide the research team with feedback as to the general applicability of the methodology under development to different institutions in Europe. The final part of the first stage of the project, which consisted of the development of a set of questionnaires to be tested in different volunteer institutions, benefitted from initial tests at the University of Sussex.

The second stage of the project, which involved the application of the questionnaire materials in different European institutions, was launched at a formal meeting held in Paris in February, 1974 at which the methodology was presented for comment and subsequent revision. As a result of this meeting, 19 institutions agreed to participate in the case study phase of the project.

Each of the participating 19 institutions agreed to complete a package of questionnaires designed by the research team. For the execution of the work a Chief Investigator was appointed at each of the institutions. It was estimated that the necessary work put in by each Chief Investigator would not amount to more than 8 weeks.

At the Meeting in February 74 the institutions voiced sceptisism concerning the composition of the research team. It was pointed out that the experience from, and the understanding of, university administration would have been a great help to the research group. In order to meet - at least partly - the problem the meeting agreed to establish an Advisory Group for the project which should assist in coordinating the case studies in each country and provide comments on the findings of the study. The members of this Advisory Group were: P. Almefelt, Linkøping University, A. Duggan, University of Dublin (Trinity College), P. Immer, Ecole Polytechnique Féderale of Lausanne, D.W.J. Morell, University of Strathclyde, A. Quilliot, University of Paris I, D. Rex, University of Essex, R. Rouquairol, University of Saint-Etienne, R. Sensique, Catholic University of Louvain, M.D. Sommerer, Bavarian State Institute for University Research and University Planning. L.U. Thulin, University of Trondheim.

The final stage of this project consisted of the processing of the questionnaire materials received as a result of the case studies. The results of this analysis and proposals for future work are the subject of the final report.

The Advisory Group received the final report in July 1974, and a preliminary evaluation report was distributed before the meeting of the Advisory Group in October 1974.

The Preliminary Evaluation Report was prepared as an assessment of to what extent the project "Comparative Effectiveness of Alternative Structures in Institutions of Higher Education" had resulted in practicable results - and how to proceed with the work in this field. In writing the Preliminary Evaluation Report the Evaluator benefitted from contributions from several members of the Advisory Group.

At the October meeting the Advisory Group agreed upon comments and conclusions put forward in the Preliminary Evaluation Report. However - as the project team informed that they had decided to re-write parts of the final report - it was found necessary to add some fresh comments to the evaluation report - after the final report had been prepared.

In this Evaluation Report the Preliminary Evaluation Report is presented as part II, and - even if some of the references to pages in the final report no longer is meaningful - it is considered valuable for the members of the programme to see the development of the project as it were: A dialogue between the project team and the Advisory Group.

PART II: THE PRELIMINARY EVALUATION REPORT.

THE SITUATION

Confronted with the expanding number of students, the rising unit costs, the increasing public critisism of academics and students, and faced with unrest and uncertainty in their internal bodies, the universities are in a situation which could be understated as depressing.

On the other hand, the future looks promising when one identifies the needs of modern society, and realises that in the universities we have important power stations, ready to produce the intellectual energy which is one of the necessary requirements if we are to solve the changing problems that will confront us all.

From this ambiguous situation it is justified to describe the future of the universities by paraphasing Charles Dickens as he opens "A Tale of Two Cities",

" It will be the best of times
it will be the worst of times
it will be the spring of hope
it will be the winter of despair."

This conflicting situation, with the high hopes and the heavy despair, are classical in stimulating neurotic behaviour. Without going into the subtleties of the question of to which extent organisations can be labelled neurotic, there are today many symptoms of neurotic reactions in university organisations. The blame for the present or anticipated problems are put on groups or factors outside one's own control, and for fulfilment of the high hopes for the future, one eagerly searches for an omnipotent saviour.

In order to rationalise our efforts to cope with our own problems, and to contribute to the model for a better future for higher education, we who participate in the IMHE programme, together try to sort out common problems and to identify means by which these problems can be solved.

More often than not, we find ourselves in a cul-de-sac, when the hopes and promises led someone to expect that we were on the high-way to "the great solution". Sometimes, however, we can conclude that the path we followed did lead us onto firmer ground, from which we can start another effort in the direction of improved performance and effectiveness.

In the following we shall try to give an answer to the question where the project "Study of the Comparative Effectiveness of Alternative Administrative Structures" dis lead us? In order to bring the evaluation down to the level where implementation could be analysed, I finally decided to ask three questions, and, hopefully, answer them.

What did we want?

What did we get?

What do we do now?

WHAT DID WE WANT?

Confronted with the grave problems in higher education, it is quite distressing to observe the rigidity of the systems of higher education. This is very succinctly put in an OECD-publication [1]:

"Innovations have been introduced during the last years in all systems through the creation of new universities and through reforms of specific aspects of higher education, such as teaching methods, the degree structure or the decision-making procedures within institutions. Almost nowhere, however, have these partial innovations affected the system as a whole; at best, they remained isolated efforts; in many cases they where negated or distorted by the traditional system. There can be no doubt that the existing structures which limit mobility of finance and mobility of students and teachers, also limit resceptivity to innovation and inhibit its diffusion".

One of the important tasks for the professional administration within universities must be to suggest innovations, and to aid in the implementation of these.- after decision in the appropriate governing bodies.

A fundamental prerequisite for the governing bodies and the administration within the institutions is to know, with as much certainty as possible, what the critical factors are. The effort has to be focused on first-order problems.- not on secondary or minutiae.

In this mapping of problem-centers within an organisation, in casu universities, it will be evident that some problems are intrinsic in nature and some are extrinsic. Of the intrinsic, or internally originated problems, some are stochastic in their nature, and has to be delt with as such.

In the dealing with stochastic problems, like a neurotic section-leader in the administration, or a strong personal dislike between the key-persons within the university, we all know - as administrators, that no general method is the correct way. We have to use our human insight and our knowledge of the informal details of our organisation. We can't solve such problems "by the book", they can only be handled by a "hands-on" control. These problems, which very often can threathen the very existence of the organisation, are not of such a nature that they are a part of the present project.

Thus, eliminating one very important part of the bulk of problems, universities try to cope with, we may ask again: What did we want from the performed investigation?

We wanted to know if there are indications of generally valid, casual correlations, between formal organisational set-up and effectiveness. An examination of this has to

1) Towards New Structures of Post-Secondary Education, A Preliminary Statement of Issues. PARIS 1971. (p. 30).

take into account the different external constraints the various institutions are exposed to. These extrinsic factors could be so strong that they dominate completely - and, thereby, no valid conclusions could be drawn across national borders, concerning organisation and effectiveness. This problem of external/internal structure is often identified by investigators probing into "the university mystery". As an example I quote from a publication from the IAU:[2)]

"A study of university administration implied not merely a study of the relations linking them to society in general. It would be arbitrary to consider these separately, since they conditioned each other. Moreover, functions which are carried out in some cases by the university internally, in others are assumed by external bodies, ministerial or other. And some systems have bodies which are neither completely internal nor completely external. This is the case with the "lay" administrative boards of American universities, the curatorial system in some German universities and, up to a point, some of the bodies functioning under the ministry of education in France".

If we go from this very crude description of what we didn't want and did want, we very soon discover that we are faced with a multi-dimensional problem. There exists well established methods for the treatment of multi dimensional models. The establishment of a workable model is the heart of the problem.

For the benefit of the further work in this field, I would like to quote another OECD- publication:[3)]

"Professors of Econometrics or Operational Research, who are experts in the construction of models and who are also concerned about the problems of the universities within which they work, have so far been unable to bring their specialist expertise and their institutional experience together in order to construct workable models for a university".

This observation underlines the severe difficulties connected with the isolation and identification of the necessary and most important parameters in a mathematical model.

In concurrence with the observation quoted above, I'd like to quote at some lenght from the newly published "Background Papers" by Alfred Morris. Mr. Morris was in 1971-73 a Research Fellow at the University of Sussex, sponsored by the Leverhulme Trust, taking part in the Leverhulme Project in the University Planning and Organisation.

In an interesting introduction to his report he writes:[4)]

"Universities contain a highly educated and skilled community of people who expect to find self-actualisation in their work, who expect to participate in decisions affecting them and who allow authority in deference to acknowledged greater

2) The Administration of Universities IAU. PAPERS-8 PARIS 1967 (p.xii)

3) Geoffrey Lockwood: University Planning and Management Techniques, OECD, PARIS 1972. (p.99).

4) Alfred Morris, "Background Papers". University of Sussex, 1974. (p. 11)

expertise, knowledge or intellect - as opposed to recognising hierarchical authority of the rational legal type described by the German sociologist Max Weber. Members of that community co-ordinate their activities in largely self-chosen groups, and enjoy a high discretionary work content. I could go on - the point is that to someone with a background of experience and some theory in 'Business organisation' it does rather look as though the university already has many of the features which, business theorists have argued, are likely to produce a highly effective, innovative, productive and satisfied organisation.

Yet, in fact universities are often thought, and not only by people distant from them, to be inefficient, and behaviour often suggests they can be frustrating for both students and academics. I believe that much of that frustration derives from difficulty, whether real or imagined, in achieving, or influencing the direction of, change.

To turn to my own background, I came to a research project at the University of Sussex concerned with resource allocation and economy within universities but with little previous exposure to such institutions. Let me describe the approach I adopted in trying to understand the university.

The approach.

I came into the university asking about objectives and found myself involved in almost theological debate to which it was not obvious that there need ever be any end. My concern with attempting to identify objectives derived in part from the suggestion that I should look at the feasibility of applying 'Planning, Programming, Budgeting Systems' to the university. Such systems usually lay great stress on specification of objectives. But my concern with objectives also reflected my inclination to turn towards the classical economic model of the organisation and indeed to regard it as almost a definition of rationality that one should specify one's objectives and articulate values as a necessary first step to deriving the activities appropriate to the pursuit of those objectives and values.

It is certainly 'tidier' if one insists that every organisation must have, and should seek to articulate, its goals or objectives.

Every public company has a well defined corporate objective in seeking to maximise the wealth of its shareholders and the micro-economic model of the firm anticipates only limited compromise of the aggressive pursuit of that objective to accommodate social considerations. The decision structure is designed to facilitate efficient achievement of the corporate objective. That model does not seem to be appropriate to a university.

Policy in an institution such as a university is politically formed through interaction between various participants producing a general preference function, which need not correspond to that of any individual participant or group of participants. It is a dynamic process best represented by a hierachy of competing objectives. Unlike the industrial organisation, the university cannot be treated as a single organism with a consistent set of desires and a life of its own. The control of a university is perpetually in the hands of a coalition.

I decided to forget about objectives and concentrate upon identifying the activities carried on in the university. One can debate objectives forever, particularly in a coalition, but it is observable that universities have car parks, and catering facilities, and more essentially, that they undertake teaching and research activities. So, after an abortive attempt to ascertain what were the objectives of a university, the first constructive step I took in educating myself to an understanding of such an institusion involved what I will describe as a activity analysis.

The second step was to concern myself with understanding the formal organisation and this I attempted to accomplish by obtaining organisational charts, information on the committee and officer structure, sight of the Charter, job descriptions and the like. At this point I had an understanding of the university, or rather of the activities and formal organisation of the university, not much better than might have been obtained by mail order and so my next concern was to identify the informal structure of the university by talking to people, getting them to gossip, to be indiscret - which is much easier in a university than elsewhere perhaps because tenure loosens the tongue; Only at this point did I begin to feel where leadership, influence and power really lay, where decisions were made and what group and individual objectives really were.

The next step in my attempt to come to grips with the nature of the university was to observe behaviour, to examine the record, and then to try to rationalise the observed phenomena given the understanding I had now acquired of the activities, formal organisation, and informal structure of the university. For this purpose I undertook a case-study based on examination of the minutes and all papers laid before a variety of university committees during the previous five years.

My inability even at this point to rationalise behaviour to my own satisfaction led me to appreciate that one must first have an understanding of the external system within which an individual institution operates. This means that I came to understand the need for a systems approach and correspondingly I turned my attention to considering the national and regional governmental offices and organisations, including negotiating bodies representing particular interest groups. In the British context they include the University Grants Committee, the Committee of Vice-Chansellors and Principals, the Association of University Teachers, the Department of Education and Science and the Research Councils in addition to other bodies. I considered not just their formal role and powers but (particularly regarding the University Grants Committee which channels the bulk of Government monies into British universities) their informal influence. I found it essential to appreciate the impact of their rules and regulations, most particularly as regards sources and conditions of finance, and only with that understanding could I begin to rationalise what I had observed.

Such a systems approach implies that any change in the external system, be it structural of procedural, demands compensating change at institutional level. It also presumably implies

that differing structures and procedures in various countries (particularly the nature of institutional autonomy, the extent and manner of governmental intervention in policy, and the basis and timescale upon which government funds are made available) demand and will produce differing institutional forms and arrangements and necessitate different planning processes.

Having aquainted myself with the external system which constrained the University of Sussex I now found that I was better equipped to rationalise behaviour at institutional level provided that I remembered that participant behaviour is not just a function of 'what is' but also of 'what is thought to be' which is to say of what is conjectured as well as what is known of decesion-making prosesses. For example, in understanding attitudes and decisions regarding student admissions in a particular year it was important to understand that those making the decisions were not certain of the procedures to be followed by the British University Grants Committee (UGC) in determining financial allocations for future years. It was commonly suspected that to admit any substantially increased number of students in that year of the current quinquennium (and remember that for a British University its annual recurrent grant is fixed every five years and is not varied in relation to any increase in student numbers) - might lower unit costs per student to a level which would become the basis on which financial provision for the next quinquenium would then be calculated by the UGC. So game theory could help explain behaviour which economic rationally could not, and one way of increasing the economic rationality of behaviour might have been to make the national planning process more visible and thus reduce conjecture".

I have a feeling that the approach in the present project more or less reflects the same attitude towards the university as an organisation.

What we, as administrators representing our universities and exposed to the everyday problems wanted, was a meaningful study into the factors governing the effectiveness of our work. When we ask for meaningfulness it is quite simple to explain what we mean.

A Meaningful project should give results whose interpretation establishes clear indications of amendments to be made in order to improve the management within our institutions.

As this was a pilot project, it should be seen and used as an exploration into the possibilities of a meaningful study.

Let us turn to the next and crucial question.

WHAT DID WE GET?

In the Final Report [5] it is stated on page 90, as a part of the Conclusion, that

"In the original proposals the investigators commented that 'A preliminary review of the literature suggests it is unlikely there exists at present any established or acceptable method of determining the effectiveness of University decision making'. Certainly that still remains the conclusion of the investigators now, and this report does not pretend in any way to suggest as a result of what has been done the 'established or acceptable methods' now exists."

There can be no doubt about the truth of this general conclusion. The outset, however, was that the investigation was preliminary and exploratory. The project was stated as a pilot one, seeking (as the Final Report says, p. 90) to establish whether or not certain lines of investigation were useful or practicable. The project team summarizes (p. 91):

"In terms of debit and credit regarding results, the project may be summarized as follows:

On the theoretical side the questionnaires do not have a firm foundation, and in an objective, scientific sense much of their contents is naive, subjective and, in parts, even academically unacceptable. Nevertheless the general approach, organisation, execution and methods of analysis (the establishment of which were prime aims of the project) were, to a large measure, independent of methodological soundness and here a fair degree of success is claimed".

In the following I would like to look at the basis for this conclusion.

If we read through the report looking for indications of possible improvements in our own organisational set-up, it is unlikely that we will find what we look for.

In my opinion the project ended up as much more "exploratory and preliminary" that indicated at the beginning. The results are indeed not very relevant for the everyday running of an institusion.

On the other hand this result was not unexpected, neither by me, nor perhaps, by any of the others in the advisory group.

As became evident already at the initial meeting in Paris, where the proposed project was discussed, the administrators thought that the project group went into the investigation with an unjustified optimism. An optimism which, to some extent, was founded on insufficient knowledge of the subject "Universities as organisations". As we can see from the results and from the comments, the optimism was unjustified and the level of expectation had to be reduced considerably. The

5) The first version of the Final Report, presented in Paris, October 1974.

Report states (p. 90):

"The implication here is that the lines of investigation existed or, at least, they could soon be assembled from a body of knowledge, which was assumed to exist. Hence it was decided that the major emphasis of the project would lie in the practical approach. Misgivings about such an approach was expressed in the initial proposals and, with the benefit of hindsight these appear to be well founded. It soon became apparent that there were no techniques of measuring effectiveness in ways that could be applied to the function of Institutions of Higher Education; and that their absence was a problem of sufficient magnitude for the whole of the project to be concerned with it.

In many respects, however, the error was found to be of positive value".

I will later return to the last sentence - and expand on the meaning of the statement.

As I have mentioned, I have decided that the more detailed criticism should be based on the October meeting, but in the following I will comment on some fundamental aspects of the Report.

When I completed the reading of the Report, I found that I had read two reports plus an annex, and I wondered: What happened to the research team? I do imagine that the shortage of time is the reason behind the heterogeneous impression the report gives, and I will not go further into this aspect of the report, but instead pay attention to the presentation of the results. My immediate reaction to the Final Report was that this is not the best way to present the results of a study of administrative efficiency to university representatives. Even if most university administrators are familiar with statistics through their jobs, and even if many of them have an advanced knowledge of statistics, the results should be presented in a way that makes the results accessible for all representatives. In future reports a great deal more effort has to be put into the presentation problem.

We could of course go into the statistical methods used and invite a lengthy discussion on these. I suggest that the time for that has not yet come. The methods applied are well enough established, and we must focus our attention on more important things. We have to bear in mind the obvious truth that even the most refined statistical methods and the most advanced computers cannot give better results than the initial information permits.

In many connections one can discover that the computer and mathematical models function as administrative fetishes, scaring the critics away. We must not put ourselves in a situation where we could be suspected or accused for being fetishists in this respect, however unjust.

The Report states on page 9 that the attention is concentrated on the departmental level, and gives as one reason for this that the dependence upon political and social environmental

factors becomes increasingly pronounced at higher levels. The Report argues that this is not unduely biased.

This approach is perhaps not "unduely" biased but anyhow "biased". If a university is subjected to strong external influence and is a centralised university, the departments as well will be dependent - through the university - upon "political environmental factors".

Further we may have a university with a very low degree of centralisation, and with low dependence upon external factors, but with a department controlled by external groups, or in which loyalty is committed to external groups, industrial, political or others.

I have concentrated on this as an introductory example of the unduely oversimplification of the organisational phenomen: A university. In the Methodological Programme the Report (p.12) explains that a whole institusion is viewed as a single system within an external environment. This is an oversimplification, and some comments are needed.

I imagine that the members of the advisory group will remember the expression "Multiversity", perhaps with somewhat mixed feelings. When Clark Kerr coined that expression[6] he observed that "The university started as a single community - a community of masters and students. It may even be said to have had a soul in the sense of a central animating principle. To-day the large American university is, rather, a whole series of communities and activities held together by a common name, a common governing board and related purposes".

Kerr says that a community should have common interests; in the multiversity they are varied, even conflicting.

Kerr writes:

"Flexner thought of a university as an "organism". In an organism, the parts and the whole are inextricably bound together. Not so the multiversity - many parts can be added and subtracted with little effect on the whole or even little notice taken or any blood spilled. It is ... a mechanism held together by administrative rules and powered by money".

Another model of the university is presented by John Millet.[7] He advocates the idea that the university has goals and objectives which bind together the university community.

"The concept of community presupposes an organization in which functions are differentiated and in which specialization must be brought together in a harmonius whole. But this process of bringing together, of coordination if you will, is achieved not through a structure of superordination of persons and groups but through a dynamic of consensus".

6) Clark Kerr, The Uses of the University, Harvard University Press

7) John Millet: The Academic Community, McGraw-Hill.

The two models are in many respects conflicting, and in many respects antithetical and antagonistic.

For the benefit of some organisational clarification I will draw attention to the two organisational concepts "federal" and "unitary".

One of the most important questions which confronts the universities is whether Clark Kerr is right, or, to put it differently, if we should allow him to become right. Personally, I think that many universities are more "federal" than "unitary", but with strong "unitary" sub-units. This is, however, not the immediately relevant point. The important point is that this problem should not be so easily by-passed as in the Final Report.

In the section called "Selection of Measures" (p.17) it is said that the methods used in compiling the list of measures were

"(a) a search through the literature on administration and education, selecting recurrent terms which appared relevant in the context of this study".

I have a feeling that the author has overstated the claim. In the time allowed for the project it cannot have been possible to go through the "literature on administration and education". On the other hand, I have a feeling that the project would have benefitted from a somewhat more extensive literature study. In the next section I will return to this question.

The report quotes the list of measures compiled and states in this connection that (p. 18), "the proposed list did meet with the general acceptance of the administrators to whom it was presented".

Personnaly I recall scepticism being voiced, but the comments on the measures may rest until the meeting in October.
(The principle for postponing the discussions and comments concerning the details of the report, nothwithstanding I would like to express the view that the content of page 50 could in itself be a great temptation to proceed with the investigations).

Concerning the conclusion (ii) on page 38, I will - if we for a moment, and for this project, introduce cost-benefit considerations -, advise against further refinements of the data at hand.

In the introduction to the Behavioural Approach (p. 65) it is stated that

"The task in this instance would therefore appear to be to establish what the goals of a University are and to set up some criteria by which to measure the degree to which any particular Institution achieves those goals. From the pilot work undertaken in the present project it is quite clear that this cannot be done, at any rate not without a very sophisticated analysis both of the term "goals" and the term "University".

I would like to point out that this was clear before "the present project" was started.

Further, I have a feeling that we are obtaining very little if we use "teaching and research" as the goals of the universities in the sense done on page 66. It is hardly more illuminating than saying that "The goal of life is life".

There are some other self evident "conclusions" which I find of very little interest. On page 68 the Report draws the conclusion that,

"ideally for greatest effectiveness a University should assign decision making to roles but that these roles should have charisma attached thereto and should, hopefully, be occupied by charismatic individuals".

This is like saying that the system should be good and that the people in it should be just as good.

If asked where the Behavioural Approach did take us, I feel tempted to say "nowhere".

The part of the Report labelled "Extension of Behavioural Approach" falls in my view somewhat beside the present project, and I am a bit confused about the intention behind that exercise. There are general statements that in my view vastly oversimplify the problems. I will point at some of these.

On page 83* the first paragraph touches the question of "the wholeness" of a university, and I refer to my comments earlier on the "multiversity". On the same page the relation between the Academic staff and the professional Administration is condensed in the question: "Who should function for whom"?. I find this question very misleading, and I think it implies a false dichotomy. The administration is an essential part of a modern university, and any other view would be reactionary.

The assumptions on page 86* concerning who should make decisions concerning the "long term health" of the university, "solve" in a couple of sentences all the problems of democratic representation and government principles within the universities.

Conflicts generating from these problems have literally turned several universities upside-down. I find it difficult to accept that the off-hand conclusions in the report are justified.

After these few comments on some specific parts of the Final Report, and saving the details for the October meeting, I would like to conclude this section by asking, once again:

"What did we get?"

We got a Report which brought us firmly down to the earth if we had left it in a momentary illusion of getting very much for very little.

When we take into account the small amount invested, the result justifies the costs and the work so far. We have got a well established cooperation and a dialogue between a research group and university administrator. This situation of cooperation and dialogue is in itself the founding stone for further progress.

* See Footnote p.9

We have even obtained more. We have developed a mutual understanding and respect. This is very much the benefit of the research group, which has shown an openness and willingness to expose their strong and weak sides which established trust.

From the Report I borrow an evaluation (p. 91)* which I make my own:

"It is suggested that in this respect the lessons and experience gained and recorded as a result of the project were extremely valuable".

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

The question of what we got stimulates another question, What we didn't get - and why not? We did not get any meaningful results, in the sense of results indicating suitable amendments to existing practice.

I think the main reasons for this somewhat meagre result could be summarized in the following points:

1) The research team has its strength in OR, and its weakness in the insight in the theory and practice of university administration.

2) The time allowed for adjustment of the project was limited. Most of the advice given by the representatives of the universities could not be taken into account, due to the time schedule.

3) The background study of the literature on university-organisation and administration was not carried far enough.

4) Within the universities there exists a vital group which, so far, are completely excluded from the project. The students, in my opinion, ought to function as one of the groups of reference in the project, even if this may create problems. This should be evident from the fact that the essential task-system in education contains teachers and students.

I am in some doubt whether to recommend to go on with this investigation or not. It is clear enough that a substantial amount of work has to be put in from persons aquainted with university administration. In order to suggest this I think it is necessary to feel that the project has a fair chance of becoming a success.

I think the following procedure would justify a continued effort within the problem-area of this project.

1) A more systematic study of the literature has to be made. And the project has to be put in context with on-going and executed research. The list of reference in the Final Report clearly indicates the need for this.

* See Footnote p.9

I'll give some examples of useful works in this field. The university as an organisation is discussed very stimulating in a publication by A.K. Rice [8]

In contrast to the theoretical study made by Rice I'll mention the report on university goals made by a commission at the Oregon State University [9]. The report is an useful example of university self-evaluation. In a recently published book by Fielden and Lockwood [10] one will find a useful bibliography.

This is a few and random examples taken from the English-language sphere.

2) A reference group of administrators should be established. Among the members of this group there should be persons with excellent knowledge of university administration in various countries. Some of them may even be aquainted with OR methodology.

   In this way one of the main weaknesses of this project may be overcome. The reference group will act as advisers. The research team will have the professional responsibility.

3) A plan for the next phase of the project has to be drafted in contact and close cooperation with the administrative reference group.

4) The proposed project must be presented to the members of the IMHE-programme for comments and suggestions.

5) Time for amendments, according to the discussion of the project-draft, has to be allowed.

6) Execution of the project can take place at the various universities, in cooperation with the administrative reference group.

This programme is clearly time- and work consuming, but the task of securing a "spring of hope" instead of a "winter of despair" for higher education cannot be brought to a happy end without considerable effort.

8) Rice A.K., The Modern University. A Model Organization. Tavistock, 1970.

9) Report to the President of Oregon State University from the Commission on University Goals, Corvallis, Oregon, 1970.

10) Fielden, I. and Lookwood, G., Planning and Management in Universities, Sussex, 1973.

PART III: CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the final version of the final report, the project team has eliminated some of the statements which are critisized in the Preliminary Evaluation Report. The final report, as it is now presented, is a very much improved version of the report presented at the October meeting. The project team is viewing the university much more realistic. They take into account the "multiversity" concept, and accept the problem of federal versus unitary organisations. The report, as it is now presented, is much more careful in presenting statements concerning how a university should be governed.

The main weakness of the project cannot - however - be solved by a re-writing of the report. The project intends to find out something about the effectiveness of university structures. The work done is concentrated on the departmental level. It is not at all clear that conclusions concerning a university can be drawn from results emerging from research at departmental level.

In the final report the project leader, Prof. Rivett draws the following conclusions:

In Mr. Lars Thulin's preliminary evaluation of this report, he pinpointed four critical questions against which this work should be judged:

(a) What did we want ?
(b) What did we get ?
(c) Was it worth it ?
(d) Where do we go from here ?

We can draw our conclusions under these four headings.

(a) What did we want ?

Our first requirement was to create, to validate, and possibly revise a methodology which would help to establish measures of administrative effectiveness and structure. We found, once we started serious research, that the project was more difficult than we had at first sight envisaged. This was not only because of its novelty, which meant there was no previous work to which reference could be made, but also because of the difficulty of obtaining on-going data. It would be wise to emphasize that we did not anticipate the present project yielding conclusive results. At this stage the emphasis was upon the creation of a valid methodology.

In order to accomplish this aim two parallel approaches were tried. The first one was to use the established guide lines of behavioural science to develop an understanding of the goals towards which universities are perceived to work. This led to derivation of ranking measures. However, this approach tended to be an academic one and kept within the established methodology of the social sciences. Such an approach, by acknowledging the limitations of any methodology concerning the behaviour of people, meant that it did not lead either to a useful - in an applied sense - classification of structure, or of quantitative measures of effectiveness.

The other approach was a systematic analysis which has led, we suggest, towards the establishment of a practicable and profitable methodology.

(b) What did we get ?

As can be seen from (a), the main burden of these conclusions will draw upon the statistical results of the Systems Approach, although we should emphasize that useful quantification is much more powerful when placed within the fabric of behavioural understanding. Notwithstanding the reservations with which we started the study, we found that the Systems Approach worked well and produced concrete measures and measuring techniques upon which comparative assessments could be rigorously based. (See II 8). Also, it should be noted that there remains some analysis to be carried out on the survey questionnaires which should produce interesting additional results.

(c) Was it worth it ?

The budget for this project was £ 4,000 which is only a small part of the administration costs of any single university. We feel that the results have more than justified this modest investment. Moreover, the stimulation of the interest of administrators in such a large number of international universities has ensured that the seeds of further research should fall on fertile ground.

(d) Where do we go from here ?

Proposals for further research along the lines of the Systems Approach are given in II 9. These, together with the rest of the report itself and the material in the Annexes, should enable interested parties to continue the methodology. In particular, we would hope that the "interested parties" would comprise a research team and a set of co-operating and co-ordinated institutions. The research team ideally would contain at least one experienced administrator and at least one statistician. The institutions themselves need not come from different countries, since the methodology proved capable of isolating differences within countries.

Such interested parties would then repeat the basic programme of the Systems Approach (see II 2) in the light of the amendments and amplifications detailed in II 9. We feel that such a project will yield original, interesting, and exciting results.

However, commitment to further research need not be so total, and several more modest proposals are offered at the end of II 9. For instance, much would be gained from a broader circulation of Departmental Procedures 2 and the Administrative questionnaires as they now stand. In particular, variations between Departments and Faculties within each institution could be investigated in addition to inter-institutional comparison.

Regarding the Behavioural Approach, we suggest that in principle the methodology is a sound one, but its application needs further work before its direct utilization can be realized. An essential feature of this approach is that it demands acceptable criteria of effectiveness and here it is suggested that further work would involve a panel of administrators who would provide those criteria. The advantage of this would be twofold: the criteria would, presumably, be at a very applied level and in addition the need to appeal to non-university organisational theorists for justification would be reduced.

In the light of the experience gained in this pilot project, we feel confident in asserting the viability and worth of continued research in the field, at least along the lines established by the Systems Approach.

As an Evaluator, presenting a recommendation concerning how the work in this field could be continued, I would like to summarize as follows:

1. A more systematic study of the litterature has to be made. The project has to be put in context with ongoing and executed research in the field.

2. A reference group of administrators should be established. The reference group will act as advisors. The research team will have the professional responsibility.

3. The research should be focused on more than one department. The aim must be to cover the university as such.

4. The Systems Approach should be preferred as method. The Behavioural Approach has to be developed further before it can be used in a practical project.

5. The next phase of the project has to be drafted in close contact and co-operation with the administrative reference group.

6. The proposed project must be presented to the members of the IMHE-programme for comments, suggestions and approval.

7. Time for amendments according to discussion of the project draft has to be allowed.

8. Execution of the project can take place at the various universities, in co-operation with the administrative reference group members.